

Healing *through* Touch in the Acute Care Setting

by Kimberly Garcia RN, CHTP/I

We all have a story to tell. It is my hope that by briefly sharing the story of my journey with Healing Touch, you will be inspired to embrace and nurture your own story. I am very blessed that the true purpose for my life is to spread "Healing Light Worldwide". Professionally, my full-time position at St. Joseph's Hospital in Tampa, Florida, is now as a Healing Touch Practitioner and educator, with the official title of Healing Touch Coordinator. My workdays are spent providing healing touch treatments to inpatients, in addition to educating patients and their family members, medical staff, non-clinical ancillary staff and community members regarding Healing Touch and its use in our daily personal and professional lives.

An equal blessing is that I am gifted to be able to accomplish this in an acute care clinical setting, where I can educate and communicate with physicians and other healthcare providers, while remaining informed of current medical trends and practices. An article was published in "The Tampa Bay Metro" entitled "Quality Care, Tampa Bay's Medical Breakthroughs and Advancements." It depicted many local healthcare facilities and their technological advancements and contributions to healthcare in the area. I am very happy to report the article included a full-page story about our Healing Touch program.

The initial question that people with an interest in a hospital-based Healing Touch program asks me is, "How in the world did you make that happen?" My initial immediate response is an echo of my prior responses to this repetitive question, "I didn't make it happen, I held my vision for a program and allowed it to manifest when the universal timing was supportive." In fact, I chuckle now when I review my Healing Touch certification packet and read my declaration, "I am very passionate about incorporating a Healing Touch program within St. Joseph's Hospital". That declaration was written in February of 2003, sixteen months prior to being offered a Healing Touch Pilot Program. I have realized the manifesting power behind my declaration. I didn't declare, "I would like to..." or "I hope to...". I declared, "I am passionate about incorporating a Healing Touch Program within St. Joseph's Hospital." I acted as if the Healing Touch Program was already a reality. Ultimately, the success of our Healing Touch program is the result of a carefully laid foundation, nurtured with loving patience over time.

My journey with St. Joseph's Hospital began in February of 2001 when I returned to Florida from my birth state



Photo: Kimberly Garcia working on a patient at St. Joseph's Baptist Hospital

of Indiana, for what I thought was going to be a brief sabbatical to learn Tai Chi from an Asian Tai Chi Master. My belief at that time was that I would be moving to the mountains of North Carolina to open a Healing Touch practice. After a short, less than satisfying stint with “agency” nursing to sustain myself financially, I accepted a position at St. Joseph's Hospital on a busy neurology unit. I had never envisioned myself working in Neurology as a specialty, and I surprised myself by choosing to do so. It is my belief that sometimes our choices are for a higher purpose than we can yet embrace. I quickly realized that I chose this area to be my “playground” for doing the Healing Touch work in an

institutional setting. The fact that I was also working with a Nurse Manager who was open to my exploration of Healing Touch was also greatly supportive. Once on the unit, I started doing Healing Touch on my patients. The other nurses started noticing the positive effect the Healing Touch interventions were having with my patients and started approaching me to work on their patients. I also became aware that occasionally physicians would be on the unit with various physical complaints. My co-workers would say to them, “Oh, you need Kimberly to do some Healing Touch work on you.” Initially they would respond, “Nah, that's okay!” Eventually they responded,

“Well, what the heck, it won't hurt anything.” As the outcomes to the physicians' mini-treatments were always positive, I realized these were my divine opportunities to raise awareness and educate others about Healing Touch. By representing the work confidently, I started gaining medical staff support. After all, experiencing Healing Touch work is often the greatest educator of all. I represented Healing Touch in my daily nursing care for three years at St. Joe's. I spoke with physicians and co-workers at every wise opportunity.

Offers to do Healing Touch sessions for staff during National Nurses Week every year were always well received. This led to increased interest by staff members to attend Healing

Ultimately, the success of our HT program is the result of a carefully laid foundation, nurtured with loving patience over time.

Touch educational in-services. I also participated in community health fairs at every opportunity.

My great opportunity for visibility came when our media department “pitched” the Healing Touch work I was doing with my patients to the local media. In June of 2004 ABC news wanted to do a feature story. I approached our senior management with glee in my voice, “Okay, what do

you want me to tell the media?" Two days prior to their arrival for filming, and during National Nurse's Week, I was informed by senior management, "We have a surprise for you, we are going to pull you out of bedside care for three months so you can complete a Pilot Healing Touch Program, then we will see what happens". That was just the beginning of my wonderful journey. My position has evolved from a staff nurse providing bedside care to that of the Healing Touch Coordinator.

Healing Touch is now done on a referral basis from physicians, nurses, patients and/or family members. The data compiled from our Pilot Program revealed increased patient satisfaction, increased team member satisfaction and a decrease in hospital length of stay-days in some cases. The average pain score on a scale of zero to ten, in over 140 patients, decreased from an average of seven pre- Healing Touch treatments to two post-Healing Touch treatments.

In less than two years since our pilot program began over 900 patient treatments have been provided and over 200

participants have attended the weekend Healing Touch classes, 15 of whom are in their year mentorship for certification.

We are in the final stages of developing of our Volunteer Healing Touch Program. We have been blessed to be part of seven feature news stories, along with other local

The data compiled from our Pilot Program revealed increased patient satisfaction, increased team member satisfaction, and a decrease in hospital length of stay...



Photo: Kimberly Garcia working on Holly Anglen, a marketing specialist at St. Joseph's Hospital

media coverage, through local radio, magazine and newspapers. We have held two successful annual celebrations for Healing Touch International Day as well. Our Healing Touch Policy and procedure is listed on the Baycare Intranet, and includes the Basic Healing Touch Sequence.

Recently a room manifested

to be dedicated to Healing Touch treatments for our team members who work so hard to provide compassionate care to our patients. Everyone associated with the St. Joseph's Healing Touch program recognizes the blessings we share in having such a program to assist our patient's in their healing processes.

I share this with you to inspire you to embrace your vision for Healing Touch at your facility. My message to you in manifesting Healing Touch as a path and not just a technique you know and do, is for you to *embody the qualities of*

confidence, trust and patience. It is essential for you to have confidence in your ability to effectively communicate about Healing Touch. You must trust in your powerful presence as a compassionate, heart-centered facilitator of healing, and also in the Healing Touch work itself. The only way for your Healing Touch vision to manifest is to allow it the time necessary to grow through patience and perseverance.

A beautiful Hawaiian healer, whom I was gifted to share time with recently, summarized

the essence of my message to you so beautifully when she imparted her core belief about life. She shared, "Life is all about Right Place, Right Time and Right Be-ing," So, I encourage you to be your heart-centered, compassionate presence, do the Healing Touch work, and hang on for the ride! 🍀

Kimberly's Bio

Kimberly Garcia RN, CHTP/I is a Certified Healing Touch Practitioner /Instructor. She graduated from the University of Evansville School of Nursing in 1983. Her nursing background with both adult and pediatric patients includes ICU, Ortho/Neuro, Home Health, Acute Rehabilitation and Pain Management. Her duties have also included nursing management, education and marketing. Kimberly is currently the Healing Touch Coordinator at St. Joseph's Hospital in Tampa, Florida. Her role includes development, implementation and maintenance of the Healing Touch Program, including a Healing Touch educational program. Kimberly is a kind, compassionate, enthusiastic health care provider and educator whose presence is both healing and inspiring.



Photo: St. Joseph's Hospital Healing Touch Group. (Kimberly is in the middle)



The Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine is a place where people come to find healing for their body mind and spirit. The Center is part of ScrippsHealth, a five-hospital campus system, in the San Diego area. The Center, located in the Shiley Pavilion, is adjacent to the Scripps Green Hospital and Scripps Clinic, home to 400 multispecialty physicians. Enhancing our healing environment, it overlooks the Pacific Ocean and the world famous Torrey Pines Golf Course. This sacred land was occupied for thousands of years by the Native American tribe, Kumeyaay also known as the "ledge people". They were known for growing and harvesting medicinal plants, some of which are still growing in the near-by Torrey Pines State Reserve.

by Rauni Pritten King RN, BSN, HNC, CHTP/I

The Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine officially opened its doors in January 1999. Based on well-documented environmental research linking a person's physiological wellness with an innate need for nature, the center's architecture was designed to elicit a calm, peaceful state of mind. The spiral nature and sacred geometry are reflected in nearly every design aspect of the Center - from the generous use of curved spaces, natural light and variations in ceiling height to the application forms, textures, patterns and colors borrowed from earth, water and sky.

This unique healing environment, combined with a physician's directed care, offers a variety of complementary therapies, including Healing Touch, biofeedback, acupuncture, music, massage, hypnosis and guided imagery. Each complement the center's full range of

advanced diagnostic testing such as CT/PET scanning.

The Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine blends outstanding medical care with evidence-based complementary therapies to support health and healing. Our physicians eval-

*The Scripps Center
for Integrative
Medicine blends
outstanding medical
care with
evidence-based
complementary
therapies to
support health
and healing.*

uate patients from a holistic perspective and prescribe a customized care-plan that addresses the body, mind and spirit. Most of the services are provided on an outpatient basis and work hand-in-hand with conventional care. Our model is based on the holistic model of patient care; that the emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of healing cannot be separated from the physical.

In conventional care, the nurse and other healthcare providers are trained to focus primarily on physical problems and symptoms. This information is frequently not enough to get to the cause of the problem. This healthcare paradigm limits the provider's abil-

Photo: The Healing Modalities Coordinator, Elizabeth Fraser, applies Healing Touch to a patient at the Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine.

ity to spend time with the patient in order to address the deeper meaning of a patient's symptoms. A major contributor to the lack of a holistic approach in conventional medicine is the lack of holistic training in medical and nursing schools. Integrative Medicine blends the best of conventional and evidence-based complementary therapies.

Healing Touch has been part of nursing care at Scripps since 1993, and Healing Touch training started in 1994. Over 70 workshops and more than 1200 nurses, doctors and healthcare professionals have been trained at Scripps.

The Scripps Green Hospital protocol for open-heart surgery patients is provided by a Healing Modalities

Coordinator, a nurse certified in Healing Touch and Guided Imagery. The patient receives a Healing Touch treatment prior to surgery to balance their energy system for the best possible outcome, then receives guided imagery CD's and head phones, which prepares the patient emotionally, mentally and spiritually for the procedure.

When the patient arrives in the intensive care unit after surgery, the patient, again, receives Healing Touch and another guided imagery CD, which focuses on pain management. Healing Touch treatments are continued each day until the patient is discharged. The Healing Modalities Coordinator also teaches discharge classes for post-surgery patients. A patient wanting fol-



low up care may schedule appointments as needed at the Integrative Medicine Center.

More than 300 cardiac surgery patients were surveyed for outcomes on pain and anxiety before and after Healing Touch and Guided Imagery Intervention. On average, both pain and anxiety scores dropped fifty percent. With the proper guidance and support, patients are able to make major lifestyle changes that can improve their quality and quantity of life. The complementary provider, such as a Healing Touch practitioner, is able to assist patients beyond their physical needs. More importantly, Healing Touch and a holistic approach to health care is healing to the patient as well as to the provider delivering the care. It is a heart centered, compassionate approach where the intent to heal is the main ingredient. 🌱



Rauni's Bio

Rauni Prittinen King, RN, BSN, HNC, CHTP/I is the Co-Founder and Director of Programs and Planning at the Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine in La Jolla, California. She is the former Nurse Case Manager for Scripps' Dr. Dean Ornish's Program for Reversing

Heart Disease. Rauni has over 20 years of experience in critical care nursing. In addition, she is a Certified Healing Touch practitioner and instructor who has been coordinating Healing Touch workshops at Scripps Hospitals since 1993. Rauni teaches Healing Touch, provides holistic consultations, writes about holistic health and integrative medicine, designs programs and gives presentations on LifeStyle Changes and Healing Environments in the USA, Canada and Europe.

Rauni received a BSN cum laude from Arizona State University. She is Holistic Nurse Certified and certified in hypnotherapy. She also has a degree in Interior Design. She is a member of the American Holistic Nurses Association and Healing Touch International. Rauni integrates complementary healing with traditional medicine and sees herself as a bridge in the process.